

# Supported Employment: The Facts

## What Are the Benefits of Working?

For most of us, work is part of our identity. When we feel good about having a job, we often see ourselves in a more positive way. Work provides structure and routines. Work contributes to one's overall health. Job income gives us more choices about what to buy, where to live, and gives us a chance to build savings.

## What is Supported Employment?

Supported Employment (SE) is a service that helps individuals find and maintain meaningful jobs in the community. The jobs are competitive (paying at least minimum wage) and are based on a person's preferences and abilities.

Researchers have studied different types of programs that help people with mental illness find and keep employment. These studies compare supported employment to many other vocational approaches and they consistently find that supported employment assists more individuals with getting and keeping a job than any other approach.

## How Does Supported Employment Work?

### Eligibility is based on individual choice.

No one is excluded who wants to participate.

### Supported employment is integrated with treatment.

Employment specialists coordinate employment plans with treatment teams: case managers, therapist, psychiatrist, the individual, and others.

### Competitive employment is the goal.

The focus is community jobs anyone can apply for that pay at least minimum wage, including part-time and full-time jobs.

### Job search starts soon after an individual expresses interest in working.

There are no requirements for completing extensive pre-employment assessment and training, or intermediate work experiences (like prevocational work units, transitional employment, or sheltered workshops). The employment specialist spends the majority of time in the community assisting the job seeker with locating employment.

### Follow-along supports are continuous.

Individualized supports to maintain employment continue as long as an individual wants the assistance.

### Individual preferences are important.

Choices and decisions about work and support are individualized based on the person's preferences, strengths, and experiences.

### Supported employment includes benefits planning.

Employment specialists help an individual understand how benefits such as Social Security or Medicaid, are affected by working. Most people are able to work and continue to receive some benefits.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Are supported employment services*

*available for part time work?* Yes, part time work is supported. For some people, this may mean only a few hours of work each week.

*Will employers hire me?* Yes, supported employment programs can locate employers who are interested in hiring qualified people who match the job requirements. SE programs in Vermont work with over a thousand employers.

### *Do employment services continue after an individual has found a suitable job?*

Working is sometimes stressful. It is not uncommon for people to make several attempts before keeping a job. Supported employment services continue for as long as the person is working and finds the support helpful.

### *I have more difficulties with my illness at certain times. How are these fluctuations handled?*

Employment specialists collaborate closely with you and the other members of the treatment team. Employment specialists receive training and supervision regarding mental illness.

### *If I am unable to work, even with the help of the supported employment program will other services still be available?*

You are still eligible for other services even when you are not working or stop receiving supported employment services.

### *How can families or supporters help?*

Providing support to your family member or friend's efforts in searching for and finding work can help. You can show your interest by learning about supported employment. The job search process is enhanced when you share the interests and talents of your family member or friend with the employment specialist and the treatment team. You can also share names of employers or job leads you may know about with the employment specialist and your loved one.

**Where is SE in Vermont? SE is offered at the 10 Community Mental Health Centers.**

## *Vermont Supported Employment Leadership Committee*

### *Vision*

All adults receiving Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) services who want to work will have meaningful, competitive employment at a level of their choice using employment supports as needed.

### *Guiding Principles*

- ▶ Employment is a key element of Recovery and will be an integrated component of CRT services at program entry.
- ▶ Individuals can work and have a right to employment and individualized supports.
- ▶ People will be encouraged to work and have career options.
- ▶ Everyone who wants to work will have access to evidence-based supported employment services.
- ▶ Peer support and family advocacy contributes to increased employment success.
- ▶ Supported Employment partners with employers to meet workforce needs.

**More details & resources on  
Supported Employment are  
available at:**

<http://www.dartmouthips.org>

**Evidence-Based Supported  
Employment is available  
through the adult  
Community Rehabilitation  
and Treatment (CRT)  
programs in collaboration  
with Voc Rehab at all  
Vermont community mental  
health centers.**

**For a listing of Vermont's  
10 CRT programs,  
please visit:  
[mentalhealth.vermont.gov](http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov)**

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**For additional information,  
please contact:**

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 **VERMONT**  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

# *Supported Employment*



**EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**  
*Shaping Mental Health Services Toward Recovery*

## *A Guide for Individuals, Families & Supporters*

### *Supported Employment*

Helping individuals who  
want to work obtain  
meaningful, competitive  
jobs of their choice in the  
community.